

**COUNCIL WORK SESSION
MONDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2010**

5:15 P.M. PROMPT

DINNER AT 5:15 P.M.

- BUDGET HEARING – 5:15 P.M. – MUNICIPAL COURT
- 6:00 P.M. – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- 6:30 P.M. – PUBLIC MEETING – HOME ENERGY
EFFICIENCY SEMINAR

Bedford City Council met in a work session at Bedford City Hall on Monday, October 25, 2010 at 5:15 p.m.

Present: Council Members: Mayor Dan Pocek, Warner Batten, Stan Koci, Paula Mizensak, Marilyn Zolata, Greg Pozar, Don Saunders. Also Present: Clerk of Council Kathleen Lynch. Administration: City Manager Henry Angelo Finance, Director Frank Gambosi, Economic Development Director Mike Mallis and Clerk of Court Tom Day. Absent: Law Director Ken Schuman.

Mayor Pocek began the Work Session with the budget hearing for the municipal court.

Mr. Day said the most obvious changes in the court this year are with personnel. Judge Junkin was not re-elected, Susan Drucker the Chief Probation Officer was elected Mayor of Solon and Peggy Morton, the former bookkeeper retired after 30 years. Mr. Day said the transition with the new Judge, Harry Jacob, has been very smooth. Both Judge Melling and Judge Jacob communicate well with each other. It was decided between them that Judge Melling would be the presiding judge.

Mr. Day was worried with the current economic conditions that the court would be struggling with collections from individuals. However, it is the contrary and collections were up this past year. Both judges are utilizing the time to pay option and it appears to be working.

Councilman Saunders asked Mr. Day if Judge Melling would continue to be the presiding, or would it alternate every year as some other courts do? Mr. Day said they decided to have Judge Melling maintain as the presiding judge.

Councilwoman Zolata said most of the line items this year were below budget. She asked about the City Hall fund. Mr. Day said the fund currently has approximately \$720,000, it is a nice cushion. Mayor Pocek said that started in 2002.

Mr. Angelo said the court paid to have the closed circuit camera system.

Councilwoman Mizensak asked if there would be any new employees hired this year? Mr. Day said that would depend on the volume of cases, if there is a big swing in them. With the bookkeeper retiring, they are going to first try to utilize a current employee and see how that works out.

Councilwoman Mizensak asked if the court still had two bailiff cars? Mr. Day said no, there is only one.

Councilman Saunders asked if the court had any plans to modernize their computer systems? Mr. Day said the court does have a fund set aside for that, with \$363,000, but at this time there is no plan to replace anything. Mr. Day said a file server has been replaced, and software is updated, but the hardware is in good shape.

Councilman Saunders asked about security issues with the court computers. Mr. Day said the court has a company, BPI, that monitors their computers and network sites.

Mayor Pocek asked how their part of the building was, and if any repairs or furniture needed to be replaced. Mr. Day said some painting has been touched up, but the furniture is good.

Councilman Koci asked if the court would be giving raises to their employees in 2011? Mr. Day said yes there would be increases this year.

There were no further questions of Mr. Day, the budget hearing for the municipal court was concluded.

Mr. Angelo discussed the only employees guaranteed raises this year for the city are AFSCME employees at 3% and this is referenced in the budget. There are no other raises budgeted at this time.

Councilman Pozar asked Mr. Gambosi about the health insurance reserve fund. Mr. Gambosi said that fund represents approximately 90 days worth of claims. There is currently a \$389,000 cushion in that fund, however the last two weeks the city has paid out over \$100,000 in claims. That is why the cushion is necessary, to absorb that. Mr. Gambosi said the city pays approximately \$2.4 million a year, and the city pays more towards the end of the year because the employee paid portion has been used up.

Mr. Pozar said with the city paying \$2.4 million and dividing that by the number of employees, it costs \$14,190 per employee. Mr. Gambosi believes on average it to be more like \$13,000 per year, per employee.

At this time, the budget hearing with Mr. Mallis, the Economic Development Director began.

Mr. Mallis said last year was a busy year but with the help of Mr. Gambosi, Mr. Schuman and others the city was able to accomplish a lot. His focus is the same as it has been for the last five to seven years, retaining and attracting new business. Recently, he sent out letters to the top 30 employers in the city, welcoming open dialogue with them.

Mr. Mallis said the city has been very successful in obtaining grants. Ben Venue received a \$2.5 million grant for clean-up of vacant property for their expansion. He is disappointed that the city did not receive the Jobs Ready Site Grant, we were ranked #1 in Cuyahoga County. This grant was extremely time consuming. The State funded the top 14 ranked projects, and ours was #18. He would be reluctant to apply for this grant again, without the commitment of Ben Venue.

Mr. Angelo said although he was not part of the JRS grant process, he did accompany Mr. Mallis to Columbus when he gave the presentation and he did an impressive job.

Mr. Mallis discussed the \$500,000 Community Development Block Grant the city would be applying for, renovating the old Baptist Church on the Square and making it into an Arts and Cultural Center.

Mr. Angelo said the city is talking to the Historical Society about this. The city would take control of the building, and therefore, the expenses, i.e. utilities, etc. The Historical Society would still like to use the building, which the city would work with them on. Mayor Pocek said the downstairs would be converted into a senior room.

Councilman Pozar asked Mr. Mallis how the retention of businesses was measured. Mr. Mallis said at the end of the year, numbers provide that information. If payroll is down, income tax is down then he will go to the business to see what is happening.

Councilman Pozar asked Mr. Mallis with 350 businesses in the city and four are about to leave, how does he find this out and what does he do to try and help that business. Mr. Mallis said the city is always willing to meet with a business and if they are unable to help them, to give them leads as to where to go for help. It is not always feasible to know when a business is leaving, they don't have to tell the city.

Councilman Pozar asked Mr. Mallis to give him an example of a success story, identify a business that the city helped and therefore, retained.

Mr. Mallis said as soon as the city hears a business is considering leaving, they meet with them. A current example is Catered Elegance. Mr. Switz, the owner, does not want to leave Bedford but the lease at his current location may not be renewed because the Sisters of Charity are selling the property.

Councilman Pozar asked Mr. Mallis who is involved in the grant writing process? Mr. Mallis said it depends on what grant it is. The Fire Department has someone they contract with to write their grants, the Police Department does their own, but ultimately it goes through the City Manager and Finance Director.

Councilwoman Zolata asked if Catered Elegance would be able to just purchase their building, or if the new owners would continue to lease to them? Mr. Mallis is in contact with the gentleman that is handling the sale for the Sisters of Charity, he will keep Council posted on the outcome.

Mr. Mallis discussed the city newsletter, and having one done once a quarter instead of twice a year. If Council wants the quarterly newsletter there will be additional costs because of the postage costs.

Councilman Saunders said grants are very important during these difficult economic times. He asked Mr. Mallis if there were any grants to do more road work? Mr. Mallis said the Issue II money has not been disbursed yet, and the city is not eligible for the \$325,000 CDBG grant because after receiving it, you become ineligible for three years.

At this time, work session was stopped for the Home Energy Efficiency Seminar that Doty & Miller was giving at 6:30 p.m. Council will resume work session at the conclusion of the seminar.

The work session resumed at 7:50 p.m.

Councilman Batten asked Mr. Mallis if the City was successful in obtaining the grant for the renovation of the Baptist Church who would control the parking lot in between the two buildings. Mr. Mallis said that was not discussed, but obviously the parking would be necessary to provide handicap parking.

Mr. Mallis said Chuck Miller, of Doty and Miller, walked through the building and said the renovations would cost between \$350,000 and \$500,000. However, these changes would make the building more energy efficient and lower utility bills.

Mayor Pocek said the utilities of the building when occupied cost approximately \$20,000 to \$25,000.

Mr. Angelo said receiving the grant will be difficult as the County is only giving one \$500,000 grant out. The operational costs will be figured out prior to the city accepting the grant, if it is received.

Councilman Batten asked about the line items on page 19 of the budget. In particular, the Special Projects portion which includes fireworks. He said the fireworks cost approximately \$40,000 last year, with the added police presence. Mr. Angelo said it is Council's decision whether or not to continue to have fireworks. The city will be \$250,000 in the black this year, with no raises to employees except for AFSME.

Councilman Batten asked what the music license fees line items contain. Mr. Gambosi said that is necessary for any of the festivals on the Square, Parties in the Park, etc.

Councilman Batten said the city is short personnel in most departments, and feels it is more important to bring personnel back to these departments before spending some of this other money.

Councilman Batten asked about the \$2,500 the city gave to the Weekend of the Pookah event, and the \$4,000 for the Arts and Cultural Board.

Mr. Angelo said these are quality of life issues and it is Council's decision to decide if they should be continued. Councilman Batten said it is something that Council should discuss further.

Councilman Koci said as an active member of the Arts and Cultural Board, the \$4,000 budgeted is not enough. It should really be between \$10,000 and \$25,000. The board received a grant today for the Weekend of the Pookah for \$550, because the grant is based on the total budget amount. The importance of the arts in the community is imperative to making Bedford a destination city. The board is trying to become a 501(3)(c). Mr. Koci said the money should be taken out of the fireworks and put into the Arts and Cultural Board, there wouldn't be any increase in the budget then.

Mayor Pocek agreed with Councilman Koci. The fireworks probably cost the city closer to \$50,000 last year and probably only 30% in attendance were Bedford residents. Council needs to decide before the budget is finalized.

Councilwoman Zolata said the functions in the city for residents are good will. She does think that there should be further discussion on the fireworks because of the problems there have been in the past. She also agreed that the Arts and Cultural Board needs to continue the events they have. Are business donations feasible?

Mr. Mallis said in regards to the Weekend of the Pookah, the timing was not right for business donations. It was a month after the levy passed and the city cannot continue to seek donations from businesses right now.

Councilman Pozar again asked about the grant process in the city.

Mr. Mallis discussed the grant writing process, and the importance of letters of support from the businesses in the community. Each grant proposal is given points for certain things, and the more support the more points.

Councilman Pozar said Mr. Mallis was not understanding what he was asking. Mr. Gambosi said all grants should go through the Finance Department. Mr. Pozar asked why the Police and Fire Department did them on their own. Mr. Gambosi said they have their own contractors for writing grants. Mr. Mallis said those grants are specific to their functions and they would know best how to do those. Mr. Angelo said it is ultimately him as the City Manager who approves the grants in the city.

Work Session was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.


Clerk of Council


Mayor - President of Council